



United States
Department of
Agriculture

August 14, 2008

National
Agricultural
Statistics
Service

TO: Nancy Hirschhorn
Chief
Grant Management Branch
Foreign Agricultural Service

1400 Independence
Avenue, SW
Washington, DC
20250-2000

FROM: Larry Sivers
Director
International Programs Office

SUBJECT: Proposed Emerging Markets Program FY 2009 Funding of NASS
International Statistical Cooperation Projects, CHINA

GENERAL:

The following proposal requests Emerging Markets Program (EMP) funding for a one-year project between the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the National Bureau of Statistics, People's Republic of China. The project objective is to provide assistance to the National Bureau of Statistics of China in improving the statistical methodology of agriculture and rural surveys in China. The National Bureau of Statistics of China has requested technical assistance and training from USDA-NASS, as part of their effort to improve the accuracy and accessibility of Chinese agricultural statistics as well as to provide more useful information.

BACKGROUND:

The project is oriented toward the continued development of capacity of the National Bureau of Statistics of China to produce and publish accurate and timely statistics for Chinese agriculture. NASS has successfully utilized EMP funding in developing an awareness within China of the need for improvement and availability of Chinese agricultural statistics. While significant improvements have been accomplished by introducing new methodology for agricultural surveys in China, there are still shortcomings in the current system from the viewpoint of USDA. The National Bureau of Statistics of China recognizes their shortcomings, and has a goal to make continued improvements in methodology of agricultural and rural surveys. The NASS role has been, and would continue to be, to provide technical assistance and guidance to meet this goal.



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AGRICULTURE INFORMATION SYSTEM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING PROJECT IN CHINA.

Proposal Date: August 14, 2008

The project is proposed by:

National Agricultural Statistics Service,
United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

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I. PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION.

China Agricultural Statistics Improvement Project (FY2009): This project would continue development and implementation of enhanced capability of the Chinese government to produce and publish accurate and timely statistics for Chinese agriculture.

II. RATIONALE.

The availability of unbiased and timely data is necessary for efficient functioning of agriculture markets. Agricultural data collected during the centrally-planned economy period is inadequate for the market economy developing in China. Agricultural statistics must be timely and accurate to be used effectively. The government and private sector will need improved data and information to make informed decisions related to the agricultural sector.

The United States also needs good data on Chinese agriculture as input to the official USDA World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates Report. This report is a major source of information for U.S. producers and traders to understand the world commodity situation, of which China is a major factor in several key commodities. Many decisions by U.S. agricultural interests are made based upon this report, and the increased accuracy of the Chinese data used in the report that could result from this project would be significant.

III. PROJECT PARTICIPANT IDENTIFICATION.

This project would work extensively with the Rural Survey Organization, National Bureau of Statistics, People's Republic of China.

Institutional Capability:

As the statistical agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) has as its mission "to provide timely, accurate and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture." NASS has also been helping to establish and improve agricultural statistics programs in countries around the world for nearly 60 years.

NASS specialists provide technical assistance and training on a reimbursable basis in all aspects of statistical surveys, censuses and data systems. The institutional relationships established between NASS and counterpart organizations, which generally continue long after projects are completed, have been mutually beneficial for understanding and addressing improvement issues.

With a total staff of more than 1300 employees, a large portion of which are professionals experienced in various aspects of census and survey work, NASS can draw from a large and diverse set of skills to support international projects. NASS is the United States' only source of a large permanent staff experienced in the practical application of the technology and latest operational developments in the field of agricultural statistics.

IV. RESOURCES REQUIRED.

The amount of resources identified in this proposal to assist in improvement of the agricultural statistics systems is for training and technical assistance. This support will be for NASS experts' travel to China to work with counterparts, with costs reimbursed at US Government travel allowance rates and salary for NASS staff involved at actual daily rate/individual plus 19.9% benefit and 20.9% leave factor rates. This will be done with the equivalent of five TDYs (10 days each) to China by NASS staff.

BUDGET NEEDS:

ITEM	Amount FY 2009 Amount (\$000)
Salaries	40
Travel	35
Total	75

In addition to the resources provided from the U.S. side for technical assistance, significant resources in the way of National staff, regional staff, and local staff, travel expenses, data collection and processing cost will be provided by the National Bureau of Statistics of China.

V. IMPLEMENTATION.

- Provide technical assistance and consultation on improving methodology of agricultural and rural surveys, so that the Chinese government can provide more accurate, timely and relevant information to data users. The major focus would be on methodology for crop surveys.
- Conduct training seminar on sampling methodologies with sampling frame development. Training will cover utilization of data from the 2007 Chinese Agricultural Census for a sampling frame. Training will also cover creating an area frame.
- Provide technical assistance, consultation, and training on utilization of satellite imagery for agricultural statistics. Training would cover use of remote sensing for producing crop area statistics, and in creating an area frame.
- Provide training on requirements for an agricultural statistical system, and consultation to the Chinese on improving statistical methodology in order to follow international standards.

VI. KEY CONTACTS.

USDA/NASS management of the project will be under the guidance of Larry Sivers, Director, International Programs. In country contact is Zhang Shuying, Director-General, Rural Survey Department, National Bureau of Statistics, of the People's Republic of China.